

VZCZCXYZ0036
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHNO #0639/01 2991518
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 261518Z OCT 06
FM USMISSION USNATO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0163
INFO RUEHXP/ALL NATO POST COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 000639

SIPDIS

NOFORN
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/26/2016
TAGS: [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [FR](#)
SUBJECT: FRENCH MANEUVERS TO PUT BRAKES ON ALLIED-PARTNER
DIALOGUE PARRIED

REF: A. USNATO 591
[1](#)B. SECSTATE 171907

Classified By: AMB VICTORIA NULAND FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In the past few weeks, France tried to launch a campaign to deny NATO partners formal 26 plus one consultations with Allies, substituting "informal" meetings. The French move began with Georgia (ref. A) and initially looked like a "one-off" move designed to assuage the Russians at a tense time in Georgian-Russian relations. Then the French extended the effort, seeking to deny 26 plus one formal consultations to Moldova. This campaign clearly was designed to weaken partnership structures just when we are seeking to expand them in the context of the Global Partnership initiative. With the help of several other Allies and some horse-trading with Paris, the French ultimately backed down, but they may arise again in the Riga run-up. End Summary.

FRANCE: Only informal meetings after consensus...

[1](#)2. (C) In a 10/18 NATO Political Committee (PC) discussion of how to reply to a Moldovan request to brief Allies in the Political Committee on the recent Transnistrian elections, France built on procedural tactical delays from earlier deliberations regarding Allied meetings with Georgia (ref. A). Rebutting both the Chair and the U.S. position, which was supported by many newer Allies (Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and the Czech Republic), France asserted that Washington Treaty consensus rules trump the 1997 EAPC Basic Document Partner dialogue guidelines and added that Paris will only accept "informal" meetings with Chisinau (REF. B). France later said Allies should reject attempts by partners to associate NATO with any issue as long as even one Ally does not agree.

3.(C) The U.S. and the Netherlands, drawing on the EAPC Basic Document and PfP Framework Document, said there is no such partner format as an "informal meeting." Newer Allies agreed, as did the Chair at a later point (while granting that, again in reaction to a Spring 2006 French assertion, sub-NAC level meetings with contact countries, were considered "informal."). Several newer Allies said that the French assertions went beyond a discussion of one partner meeting and went to the core of Allied-Partner dialogue. (Comment: we agree. End Comment.)

...and only with some partners

4.(C) France then asserted that "Paris actually prefers that the Political Committee see no Partners but those with "privileged status," (note: this means those in Intensified Dialogue or the Membership Action Plan - Ukraine, Georgia,

Albania, Croatia or Macedonia) and all others should go to the Political Military Steering Committee (PMSC). Italy supported this line, but less stridently. The UK commented that this reasoning was "odd" since it would have the effect of placing those partners on a membership track in a more restrictive partner format than other EAPC Partners. The U.S. also said that it would be unwise to suggest to a Partner political consultations be directed to a committee that focuses chiefly on political-military and military-oriented issues, like the PMSC.

The plot thickens...

5.(C) When French PermRep Duque recently approached Ambassador Nuland for help in meeting French needs in the Kosovo Contact Group, on instructions from French Political Director Araud, Ambassador Nuland offered to help if Araud would stop the idiocy on partnership. This deal appears to have stuck -- at least for now, if reluctantly on the part of the French delegation.

And resolves itself, for now

6.(C) In a continuation of the dispute in the 10/23 PC, and following the U.S. 10/20 letter asserting formal status for partner meetings, all Allies gradually rallied around formal status for Partner meetings and France agreed to the meeting as a formal gathering, albeit with a slightly revised name.

7.(C) Comment: The French were clearly seeking to develop braking levers over Allied-Partner dialogue in advance of the Global Partnership decisions at the Riga Summit. Had the French assertions remained unchallenged, they would have

allowed Paris, in advance of Riga, to have set the precedent that it could control many of the levers controlling 26 plus N meetings with partners. Aided by the Poles, Baltic Allies, Czech Republic, Dutch and occasionally the UK, plus some horsetrading, we, to date, have deflected these French procedural parries, winning the argument that partner meetings are formal by rule. These discussions also have demonstrated a clear older Ally preference (FR/IT/UK/GM/SP) to avoid discussion of the Frozen Conflicts or other issues where NATO involvement might antagonize Russia. End Comment.
NULAND